

The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Issue 195

Summer 2011

Overlooked History of the Greenwich Steps

p. 1

"ME, MY WIFE AND MY GODDAMN MOTHER-IN-LAW"

Anyone who has been around Telegraph Hill for any length of time knows about Grace Marchant and her garden on the Filbert Steps. Less well known is the contribution of Grace's daughter, Valetta Heslet, and her husband Desmond, the forces behind the garden on the Greenwich Steps. We feature here an account of this couple omitted from Mark Bittner's book "The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill." Dogen is one of these parrots.

By Mark Bittner

One afternoon, I was sitting with Dogen when the phone rang. It was a neighbor calling to tell me that Valetta Heslet had passed away. Valetta had planted the Greenwich Steps gardens, creating the habitat that brought the parrots to Telegraph Hill. I'd known she was near death, but I still felt some shock at hearing it. It meant that substantial changes would be coming to the neighborhood; and for a neighborhood such as the one I lived in, it seemed that any change could only be for the worse.

In 1912, Grace Merchant, 26, and her 3-year-old daughter Valetta, boarded a train in Mellette County, S.D., for Los Angeles. Grace was a farmer's daughter and had married a farmer, but she was bored with rural life and hoping to get a new start in show business. Not long after she arrived in California, Grace found work with Mack Sennett, the creator of the "Keystone Kops." Grace Merchant then became Grace Marchant, bathing beauty and stunt woman, whose specialty stunt was diving off ocean liners.

Grace's career was not very successful, but she had plans for her daughter Valetta, who was studying dance and piano at an early age. While still in her teens, Valetta began working as a chorus girl, first for RKO Studios, then for Paramount. She was in the chorus line of several Hollywood musicals, and spent much of her youth traveling in trains and dancing in theaters across the country. Grace had quit her other jobs and become the seamstress for Valetta's dance troupe. Valetta was a somewhat frail girl, and the touring eventually took its toll on her. She was desperate to stop touring, but Grace pushed Valetta to keep working. They argued about it constantly.

One day in the early 1930s in a theatre in Los Angeles, Desmond Heslet was standing at the top of a ladder hanging some posters he'd designed. As he worked, a dance troupe rehearsed below. He paused to watch, and one of the girls caught his eye. Desmond said it was love at first sight. He climbed down the ladder, waited for a break in the rehearsal, then struck up a conversation with the dancer. Valetta was so exhausted



Desmond and Valetta Heslet.



Grace Marchant

PHOTO BY LARRY HABEGGER

that she felt ill. Unable to conceal her condition, she explained everything to Desmond, who decided that he was going to rescue this "little waif of a dancer."

Desmond's childhood had been as unique as Valetta's. Born in Los Angeles, he'd spent much of his youth in Copper Canyon, Mexico, where his father managed a silver mine. Many of the workers were Yaqui Indians, and Desmond spent a lot of time in their presence. The Heslets had a famous acquaintance, who was also an occasional dinner guest, Pancho Villa. The relationship began one day when Villa and his men were seen riding toward the village where the Heslets lived. All their neighbors were alarmed, but Desmond's mother responded to the news by calmly preparing dinner for Villa and his men. Because she welcomed him fearlessly, Villa took a liking to her and her family. He protected them — he's said to have executed one of his men for stealing a Heslet horse — and he rewarded her for the dinners with gold coins. In later years, Desmond often displayed a rifle that he claimed had once belonged to Villa.

Desmond's courtship of Valetta went well, and they were soon married. To get Valetta away from Grace, Desmond took her north to San Francisco. It was the time of the Great Depression, and he'd heard that



Greenwich Steps, Heslet Compound at right, the bay in the distance with Yerba Buena Island.

PHOTO BY JULIE JAYCOX

THD IS MORE THAN POLITICS

When Kathleen Cannon, *The Semaphore's* former ad salesperson, would solicit local merchants for ads, she would point up Telegraph Hill and ask rhetorically, "See Coit Tower up there? Well, you wouldn't, if it weren't for the Telegraph Hill Dwellers."

True Enough, In its 50-years-plus history, THD has fought many political battles, including the struggle to establish the 40-foot height limit that today allows us to view Coit Tower as a welcoming anchor in our neighborhood. THD is why our neighborhood continues to be free of the chain stores that would dilute our community's special quality.

We are about a lot more, however, than fighting City Hall. We are about building a beautiful and vital corner of our great city. That's why we took the lead in the restoration of Pioneer Park and worked with Friends of the Urban Forest to plant 400 trees all around the Hill.

It's THD that sponsors the annual North Beach ArtWalk, organizes candidates' nights and issue forums and helps to make possible Movie Nights in Washington Square.

But we want to do more. We want to be the neighborhood barbershop, where all members of our "small town" can tell stories, argue ideas and get to know each other.

Please join the Telegraph Hill Dwellers Association. We want you to join us so your ideas can be heard. Fill out the new members form on page 15, enclose a dues check, and we will call you for a chat just like a couple of small-town neighbors kvetching over the back fence.

Also let us know what you think of *The Semaphore* at art.peterson@thd.org

Art Peterson
Semaphore Editor

the city was a good place to find work. A commercial artist, Desmond worked for the telephone company briefly, then found a job in the art department at the *San*

continued on page 8



PRESIDENT'S CORNER



By Jon Golinger

In 1954, the Municipal Railway threatened to eliminate the 39-Coit, a bus route that then, as now, weaves its way through the heart of North Beach and Telegraph Hill. Six local residents organized their neighbors to speak out about the necessity of a public-transit option in the neighborhood, and they saved the 39-Coit. Out of that citizens' organizing effort was born the Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

Our neighborhood has fought since then to preserve and expand public-transit access to this most dense corner of our intense city. Even for residents who own cars, having the option to use the 41-Union to get to work on Market Street, the 39-Coit to schlep groceries up the Hill, or the 30-Stockton to make it to a Giants game can make a huge difference on a hectic day. Fewer cars cramming onto congested streets is better for our health and our environment.

That's why it is so disturbing that our representatives at City Hall keep slashing bus service, raising fares and pouring good money after bad into the Central Subway project, which one newspaper recently called "one of the most expensive mistakes city officials have ever made." The proposed 1.7-mile Central Subway line would begin at an above ground station South of Market at Fourth and Brannan streets, then travel underground with a stop at Moscone Center, bypass Market Street, stop at Union Square, then end with a stop at Stockton and Washington streets in Chinatown. Possible future plans would extend the Central Subway to Washington Square in North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf.

In July, the Civil Grand Jury issued a scathing 58-page review of the project entitled: "Central Subway: Too Much Money for Too Little Benefit." Based on seven months of research and interviews, the Grand

Jury report exposed major flaws in Muni's plans. Among the Grand Jury's findings:

With Muni already facing a \$2.5 billion capital shortfall, spending an additional \$1.6 billion in taxpayers' money for the short 1.7-mile Central Subway would severely strain an already overloaded system and lead to more cuts in bus service.

Muni's funding plan for the Central Subway is overly optimistic and fails to take into account the huge cost overruns that have plagued other Muni construction projects.

Because the Central Subway would be a stand-alone line, not directly connected to any other Muni Metro lines, the 1,000-foot distance that passengers would have to walk through underground tunnels to connect to other lines would make it extremely difficult and potentially unsafe to navigate, especially for seniors and the disabled.

Ignoring these concerns — and despite deep uncertainty about whether federal funds will be provided — the Board of Supervisors recently voted to spend an additional \$57 million in local tax dollars to purchase two oversize tunnel-boring machines to begin digging tunnels for the project. Muni plans to bore the deep tunnels to Washington Square, resulting in major construction and disruption on Columbus Avenue and along the Square in the next few years.

Many who regularly ride Muni and have seen neighborhood bus lines eliminated and others perpetually threatened, watched fares increase and then increase again, and waited patiently for improvement of the slow and chronically overcrowded 30, 45 and 8X buses, share similar concerns. After hearing from proponents and opponents of the project, in August 2009 THD's Board adopted a motion stating that, "THD is a pro-

public transportation organization, but does not support the Central Subway Project for the following reasons: 1) the cost is significantly disproportionate to the stated benefits; 2) the project fails to serve the transportation needs of the city at large; and 3) the project creates potential adverse impacts to Chinatown, North Beach, Washington Square and their historic resources. THD encourages the city to redirect its commitment toward improving and expanding existing surface public transportation systems, thereby increasing the benefit and reducing the cost."

The Sierra Club — as much a pro-public transit organization as any — agrees. The Sierra Club recently urged Muni "to reject any capital investment that will add to its financial shortfalls. Muni should prioritize its capital investments to improve service delivery, increase ridership and provide the maximum benefit for each dollar invested. The Transit Preferential Streets [bus line improvements] along Stockton should be at the top of the list. The club urges Muni to find alternative uses for unspent Central Subway funds."

While the Central Subway appears to have unlimited resources and political juice behind it and some initial construction has already begun, the Civil Grand Jury's new report shines a powerful spotlight on a project that simply appears not ready for prime time. With federal funding thrown into question by the national financial crisis, the time is ripe to fix this problem. Instead of spending \$100 million per one-tenth mile on what appears to be a classic government boondoggle, it would seem to be much wiser for City Hall to spend scarce taxpayers' dollars helping residents and visitors in our neighborhood get out of their cars and onto the buses.



THD BOARD MOTIONS

FOR THE MONTHS OF APRIL/MAY 2011

Motion from 4/19/11 THD Board Meeting:

THD supports the appeal of categorical exemption from environmental review for 726 AT&T above ground utility boxes on S.F. streets. (Passes Unanimously)

Motion from 5/17/11 THD Board Meeting:

The THD Board approved the new revised budget as proposed. (Passes unanimously)



IN MEMORIAM

DR. MARION MEYERSON
1935-2011

Beloved wife of Bernard Meyerson and long-time THD member and leader. She will be warmly remembered and deeply missed by all of us on the Hill.

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307-1205

MILDRED A. GARDNER AKA "MILLIE"

By Dick Boyd

Millie, the adopted "character" of old-time North Beachers, remains a bit of a mysterious presence to some. We do know that she arrived in San Francisco sometime in the '50s. Many of us remember her from those days when she sold flowers at the bars, clubs and restaurants around the neighborhood. She's 88 now, but she's still on the go although using a cane. Hey, she's 88! I was there when her 86th birthday was celebrated at Enrico's Café on Feb. 23, 2009. All kinds of local denizens came to help her celebrate and get their picture taken with her.

A few days earlier she had been rescued from a misadventure in Reno. She had gone up to gamble at a specific casino, but caught the wrong bus. When she got off she was disoriented and ended up in a hospital. After articles in *The Chronicle* and some serious investigating, she was located in a Reno hospital. The owners of Columbus Cutlery, below the hotel where Millie resides, drove up to Reno and brought her home. So you could say the birthday celebration at



Millie and Dick Boyd.

Enrico's was a double-header to celebrate her birthday and her return.

Millie was born on Feb. 23, 1923 in Cleveland, Ohio. Her grandparents were born in Russia and got out around the turn of the 20th century during a tumultuous time of protests against the czar. They settled in Cleveland where there was a supportive Jewish community. These days when Millie gets a ride she attends Temple Beth Shalom at Arguello and Lake. She says this is her favorite temple.

Somewhere along the way, probably when she arrived in San Francisco, she acquired a husband. He lost his right arm in the Dec. 7, 1941 attack at Pearl Harbor where he was serving in the U.S. Navy. He settled in San Francisco after being treated and discharged from Letterman Army Hospital in the Presidio. He has since passed away, but their pictures can be found among a group of notable North Beach habitués in the painting above the Union Street entrance to the Café Divine. The couple frequented the Old Spaghetti Factory (now the Bocci



Sketch of Millie.

Café) on Green Street.

At Café Divine, Millie comes in so often owner David Wright has a Stuart Jackson etching (above) of her hanging in a corner now known as "Millie's Corner."

She can be found there daily where David provides her with free coffee and "gumable" pastries, which are necessary because she has no teeth. Occasionally, in the early a.m., she's seen in Vesuvio reading whatever newspaper somebody left behind. I have seen her as far away as Aquatic Park on her way to I know not where. She is blessed with a number of guardian angels that look out for her and prefer to remain anonymous.



SWIMMING IN THE BAY—THREE SWIMMERS' TALES

Zack Stewart

When I joined the South End Rowing and Dolphin clubs in 1962, bay swimming was very different than it is now. The annual Golden Gate and Alcatraz swims prevailed. We relied on three genius tide pickers — Phil Hunter, Lawton Hughes and David Linton.

Lawton used to take me to mid-span of the Golden Gate Bridge the day before the annual swim. Using his wristwatch, he would drop chunks of wood into the water 200 feet below and find the exact time the beach gyre, a vortex of water, would slide along, weakening the ebb tidal front. The next day, offsetting for the moon's gravitational stepback, he would drop the Dolphin swimmers on the northward flowing current that float-



Aaron Peskin (right) and fellow South End Rowing Club members prepare for a bay dip.

ed them across the Gate to Lime Point.

A curious part of the gate swim was the colorful parade of pilots in their rowboats. Ten of these boats were tied to a hawser, a giant cable towed by a powerful water taxi. I unwillingly rigged the hawser for Gordon Cook alone, who refused to row out to the swim. To my knowledge the hawser hasn't been used since then.

About the time of the Gordon Cook tow, bay swimming changed forever. The traditional swims continue, but there are now an endless number of new swims and swimmers. This adds up to swimming overkill, like the 2,000 swimmers in the 2011 Escape from Alcatraz.

Judy Irving

Aquatic Park is bounded by the curve of Municipal Pier and the breakwater, which protects the historic ships at the foot of Hyde Street. Boats enter and exit Aquatic Park through a small opening between these two. I like to swim out the opening to the bay, take a look at the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz, float on my back and look up at the sky, and live for a moment in the moment. One day, I was out at the opening, having completed my rituals and just about to swim back into the cove, when a huge sea lion reared up out of the water 10 feet in front of me and bared his teeth. He looked at me, I looked at him. My heart started pounding against my bathing

suit. I smiled, said in a small voice, "hi." I was sharply aware that this was his territory. He let out a deep "huff," blowing hot sea-lion breath in my face, and dove directly below me. I went horizontal to bring my legs to the surface, and felt a whoosh beneath me. Then he was gone. He hadn't chomped me. He'd simply made

his point. Swimming in San Francisco Bay is a real-life, real-time adventure, never the same, always wild, invigorating and mysterious. I've been hooked on it for 24 years.

Aaron Peskin

Every bay swim is remarkable, but the swim that stands out most happened in the late 1990s when some 80 of us were swimming across the Golden Gate from Marin to San Francisco: As I turned my head to take a breath of air, I noticed a looming shape the size of a skyscraper approaching the path of our swim. I stopped swimming and turned to the west to see a huge freighter chugging into the middle of the swim. Realizing I was in the path of this giant ship, I quickly decided to turn around and hightail it back toward

the Marin shore. I still remember the wave coming off the bow of the freighter as it passed by. Then, my heart pounding, I turned back and swam to Fort Point. ✦



Hazel Lagenour, first woman to swim the Golden Gate in 1911.
PHOTO: FOUNDSF.ORG

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WATERFRONT COMMITTEE REPORT



By Vedula Puri

“One of the strongest assets of the northeast waterfront is its physical landscape. Its identity is defined by the prominence of Telegraph Hill and its craggy dynamited face to the west, and views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island to the east.” This is one of the leading sentences in the new study titled: “A Community Vision for San Francisco’s Northeast Waterfront.” It didn’t seem possible that several neighborhood groups, with disparate interests, would come together and prepare a unified vision for the northeast waterfront (NEW). Among other issues, the neighborhood groups were unanimous in maintaining a 40-foot height limit along the Embarcadero and up to Telegraph Hill and Coit Tower.

The last time such an effort was undertaken by the Port of San Francisco, it took legislation ordering a study to be prepared, a decade of planning and numerous hearings. The result was the “Waterfront Land Use Plan.” The port is required to comprehensively update this plan every four or five years, but it has not done so.

After repeatedly calling on the port and planning departments to act on this requirement, with no response, the neighborhoods decided the time had come. Led by a professional planning company, the THD, along with several other neighborhood groups,

including the Chinatown Community Development Center, worked together to develop a comprehensive plan for the NEW.

Why this study is different from all the others is easy to define. It is the first time that a study looks to the needs and wants of the community in light of existing uses, comes up with a set of recommendations that will produce revenue-generating projects and guide development along the waterfront that is compatible with existing height limits. Over the course of a year, several working groups of neighborhood activists poured over maps and came up with a series of potential developments — such as boutique hotels, a performance center and a bike/transit center — all along the waterfront. The study is meant to serve as a guide for development. The idea is to avoid a project-by-project fight. If the city and developers can propose projects that fulfill the goals of the CommunityVision — the chances are high that those projects will have community support. A novel concept that shouldn’t be so novel in our precious neck of the woods.

The four guiding principles underlying the community study are:

- Begin with people and neighborhoods;
- Plan for a harmonious city, a socioeconomic and ethnically diverse waterfront;

- Enhance and preserve the community’s recreation opportunities and
- Plan for the future of the northeast waterfront as a whole.

Using those principles and after serious discussions, the community study makes the following concrete recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Improve neighborhood and pedestrian connections between the waterfront and the adjacent communities of the Golden Gateway, Chinatown, North Beach, Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Polk Street and Nob Hill.

Recommendation 2: Create improvements along the waterfront that move it toward a truly pedestrian- and bike-friendly Embarcadero promenade.

Recommendation 3: Create an open-space plan for the NEW that meets local and city needs and draws neighborhood residents, downtown workers and visitors to the waterfront.

Recommendation 4: Provide not just passive open space, but opportunities for programmed active recreation that meets neighborhood and city needs.

Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive NEW transit plan that connects neighborhoods to the waterfront and visitors to existing parking resources.

Recommendation 6: Develop and implement a comprehensive parking plan for downtown and the NEW areas that meets the needs of commuters and businesses and takes advantage of existing underutilized parking resources.

Recommendation 7: Bring economic development and active street uses to existing infrastructure, not just new development.

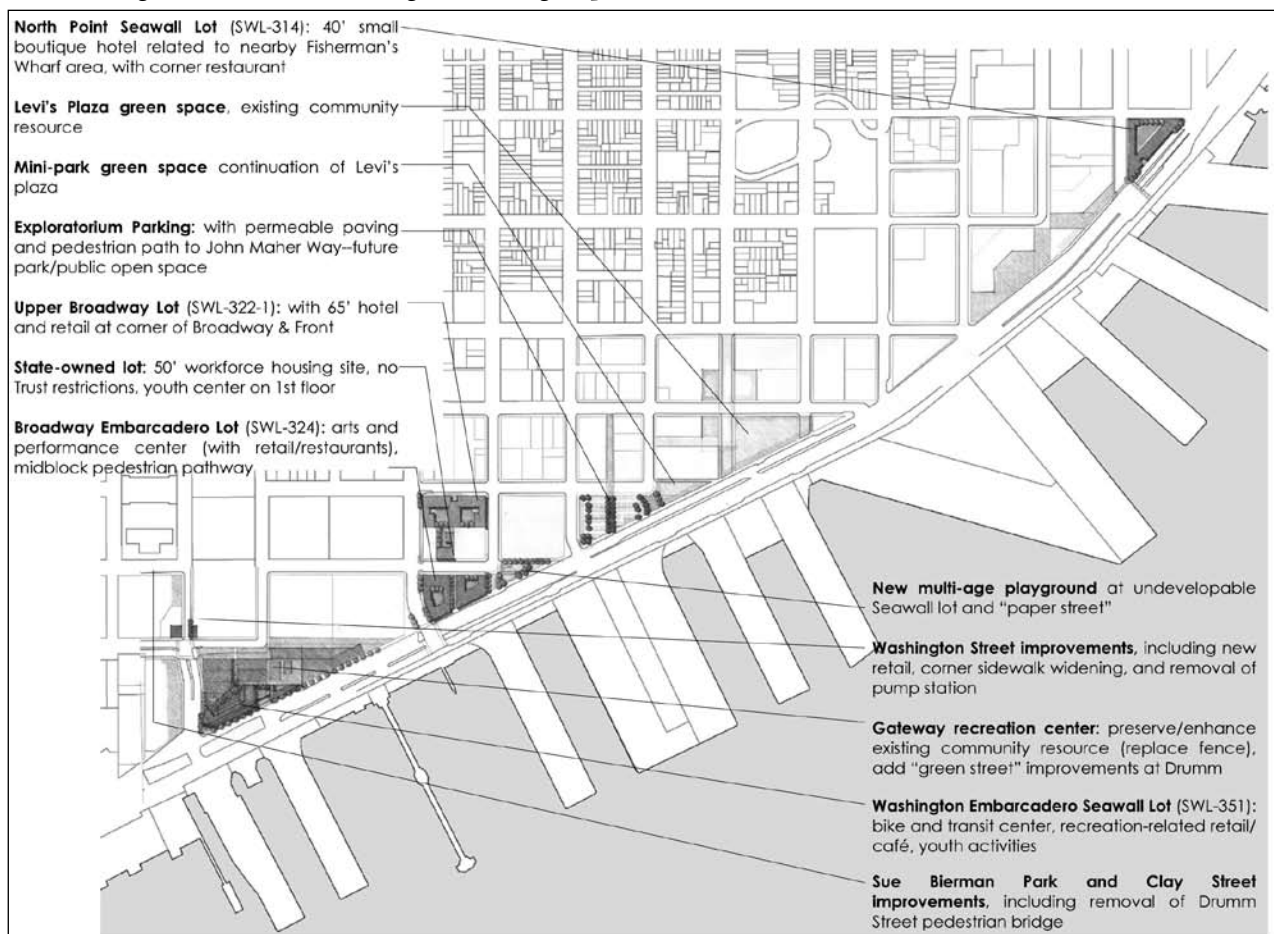
Recommendation 8: Create development opportunities for publicly owned lots that balance revenue generation with community benefits and respect neighborhood character.

Recommendation 9: Develop building guidelines to respect neighborhood character.

Recommendation 10: Create an implementation plan with identified infrastructure costs, potential funding streams, lead agencies and timelines to carry out this work in step with private development.

Most recently, the neighborhood groups that sponsored the community study presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission as an informational item. The THD’s Waterfront Committee continues to be hard at work tracking the Exploratorium’s progress, responding to the draft EIR on 8 Washington Street and draft EIR on the America’s Cup. Stay tuned for more updates in your next *Semaphore*.

The map at left illustrates our recommendations.



Caption Winner!

The winning caption to the THD caption contest to accompany the above photo is

“OH LOOK, SNOOKUMS, HERE COMES CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS”

submitted by Tom Simundich
San Pedro, CA

Nancy Bui
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WHO WAS JACK EARLY?

By Art Peterson

The name Jack Early has been much bruited about the neighborhood during the last couple months because it was his bequest to the Telegraph Hill Dwellers that has made possible the planting of new trees in Washington Square. Who was this rather elusive figure?

After making a success of his advertising business, Jack Early took on as his life's goal the greening of Telegraph Hill. The results of this effort are most prominently evident at Jack Early Park, the tiny piece of greenery at Grant Avenue and Pfeiffer Street near where Early lived.

The park was essentially Early's single-handed creation. In 1962, after winning clearance from the city, he began planting shrubs, eucalyptus and Monterey pine on this patch of land the city did not know how to use. For years he hauled buckets of water up the hill to nurture the plantings. He also persuaded developer Cal Rossi, who was building a condo project nearby, to contribute the railway ties used for the steps that provide access to the park. The stairway retreat was dedicated in 1986.

Herb Kosovitz was on the THD committee that was closely involved with the design and execution of the park as it progressed. He remembers: "We were also responsible for choosing its name. We favored Pfeiffer St. Park — Jack wanted Alcatraz Heights Park — none of us liked that. At some point in the deliberation Jack said, 'Well, you could name it Jack Early Park.' A rather awkward silence followed, but I thought it

was wonderful of him to be so forthright, and said, 'bravo.' He deserved it after his years of dedication to the beautification of that neglected hill.

"Another crucial moment came when the committee gathered at the top of the newly constructed stairway to determine the height of the viewing platform. A number of property owners from the 200 block of Chestnut Street were there to insist that the platform be at grade. They didn't want to look at or be looked at across their rear yards by tourists on a raised platform. They were so adamant that the committee gave in to them. Jack and I were the only ones who voted against that decision. After that meeting, Jack researched the conditional use permit and found that it contained a requirement 'To provide a level viewing area at the top of the hill, which would have a panoramic view over and above the project roofs.' Jack wrote a strong letter of protest to the committee. We met again and a majority voted to go



(L-R) Nan Roth, Maggie Bayliss, Jack Early, Rhoda Robinson and Herb Kosovitz at THD's dedication of the plaque at Jack Early Park.

ahead with the viewing platform as planned. "Jack said he'd spent 22 years on the project. He never let go. Meeting that rough, intimidating guy, one would never have thought that the spirit of a tender-hearted tree-lover lurked inside." Early died in 1997, leaving a bequest to the Hill Dwellers for purposes of keeping the Hill green. ✦

THE JACK EARLY BEQUEST

By John Golinger
THD President

Jack Early was a generous man. In life, Jack was extraordinarily generous with his time. He devoted thousands of hours to caring and vigorously advocating for the beautification of the place he adored, Telegraph Hill.

In death, Jack was extraordinarily generous with his money. When Jack died on Dec. 30, 1997, his carefully crafted handwritten will left a sizable portion of his estate to organizations he believed in, such as San Francisco Beautiful (\$10,000), Friends of the Urban Forest (\$5,000), Guide Dogs for the Blind (\$5,000) and the SPCA (\$5,000).

Jack left his most generous organizational bequest, \$100,000, to THD. In doing so, he specified that some of the funds should be used for specified proj-

ects: \$10,000 to improve Pioneer Park; \$10,000 for the care and further development of Jack Early Park and the Francisco Street Steps; \$15,000 for evergreen trees throughout Telegraph Hill and \$25,000 for trash receptacles placed throughout the Hill.

Following an arduous three-year probate process (thanks to the vigilance of past THD presidents Joe Luttrell, Gerry Crowley and Aaron Peskin), THD received Jack Early's bequest in 2000 and set up a dedicated account to manage the funds. Since that time, \$23,070 has been spent to improve Pioneer Park (leaving zero dollars in the Early fund dedicated to Pioneer Park — \$13,070 from the unallocated portion of the bequest was also spent on improving the park); \$763.28 was spent to care for the Francisco Steps (leaving \$9,236.72 for Early Park/Francisco Steps); \$880 was spent for trees on the Filbert Steps and \$3,831.25

was spent to plant five large trees in Washington Square (leaving \$10,288.75 for evergreen trees throughout the Hill). None of the funds dedicated to trash receptacles on the Hill have been spent.

During the past decade, the members of THD's Board have sought to manage Jack Early's generous bequest in the same way that any of us would expect our own to be managed by an organization or individual to whom we entrust it: with prudence and an abundance of caution. Jack Early's will imposed no deadline for the expenditure of his bequest. However, in the wake of the recent celebration for the planting of Jack Early trees in Washington Square, the THD Board actively welcomes new ideas for creative ways to spend the remaining dedicated funds in a manner that respects and celebrates Jack Early's generous life. ✦

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Chris Stockton, Financial & Membership Secretary

Every so often members ask, "What happens to the personal information that I give THD on my membership application?" Well, the short answer is, "Not much!" But, to be more thorough, THD uses a computer program called "Access" and each membership has an "Access" file. The file contains your name(s), street address, telephone number(s) and e-mail address(es). When you first join your type of

membership (individual or household or senior) and your month of joining is noted on your file; this then establishes your subsequent billing cycle for annual dues. When you pay your annual dues, the date and amount of your check is added to your file; your next payment date (typically 12 months later) is noted; and any corrections to other information are made (such as, change of e-mail, change of membership type, etc.).

This data is then used as follows: 1) The "Access" program almost automatically forms mailing labels which are used to send out annual dues notices, past dues notices (two months late), and final dues notices (five months late) by the THD financial secretary. (Next time you receive a dues notice, look for a date next to your address. This is your anniversary date based upon the month that you first joined THD.) 2) The "Access" program automatically prepares a worksheet of mailing label information which is sent by e-mail to the company that addresses and mails "The Semaphore" to all members and about 75 others, (government officials, etc.). 3) Your e-mail address is copied from your data file and given to another THD board member, who separately manages all membership e-mail addresses and who sends out THD announcements and invitations. 4) Your name(s), telephone number and committee preferences are given to board members at board meetings so they may call you regarding committee meetings and other business. And, 5)

Members who have been recently sent past dues notices and final dues notices are also given to board members at board meetings.

Your personal information is not given to other organizations, groups or individuals.

Since the beginning of the year, several members have made donations to Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Whether it's \$5 or \$55 added to an annual dues check, it is really, really appreciated. Every donation helps THD continue to produce its award winning, real ink-and-paper publication, "The Semaphore."

The board members and officers of THD sincerely thank the following members for their very generous extraordinary support:

- Natashia & David Ansted
- Holley Arbeit & Jack Grippi
- Sarah Flanagan
- Barbara & Ron Kaufman
- Barbara & Thomas Latour
- Jeanne Milligan & Peter Dewees
- Mary Etta Moose
- Patricia Shean
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- Jack Weeden & David Davies

If you're looking for something unique, you're sure to find it at THE CANNERY at Del Monte Square! Once the world's largest fruit & vegetable cannery as Del Monte's Plant #1, THE CANNERY is a dramatic urban space modeled after old European piazzas showcasing unique shops, galleries, restaurants, bars and live entertainment. Today it is home to unique shops and restaurants. Every day and night, THE CANNERY is alive with festivities and activities for all ages.

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TALES OF TELEGRAPH HILL: THE EGG

By Frank and Judy Foreman

It was 1967 and we were living on Vallejo Street at the foot of Telegraph Hill, near Sansome Street. Each day, on leaving our apartment, we were confronted by an offensive sight: At the top of our street, above Montgomery, was a vast space of ugly concrete. It was too steep to drive on and was blocked to traffic. This, of course is the same location where, as a result of the persistent urgings of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, a lovely city garden now exists. But then the vegetation consisted of three scrawny trees.

For a few years we had been contemplating a little beautification project of our own. While we would have preferred trees and flowers, we decided to work with the resources we had available, an ample supply of powdered tempera paint.

Our plan was to create a psychedelic-Easter egg for this space. In 1967, psychedelic seemed just right. Of course, we knew that the paint was water soluble and would soon fade to look like an old fresco, eventually disappearing. But the fleeting quality of the work would be part of its charm.

Working with six or seven others, at about 1 a.m. Easter morning, we laid out the perimeter of the

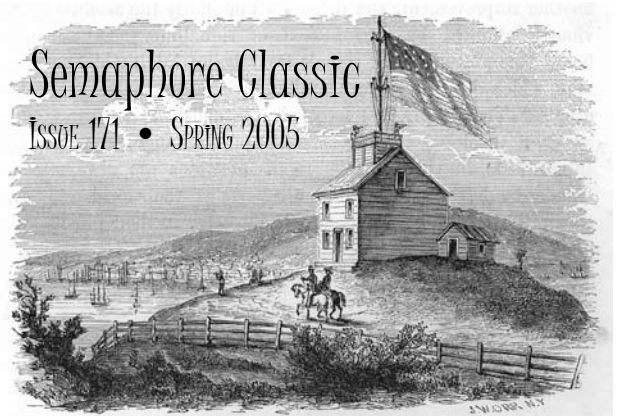
egg shape (it was about 100 feet tall). Then, working silently for hours, each of us, armed with a paint bucket and brush, proceeded to paint swirls circles, peace symbols and other colorful shapes within the confines of the giant egg's border. In deference to the true spirit the holiday and to ward off any Christian police officers who might take issue with our plans, we painted a large cross down the middle of our creation. The text at the base of the egg read "For the Children, 1967."

Just before dawn, a car pulled up on Montgomery at the bottom of the hill, two guys jumped out. They were delighted by our work. They told us they had just been released from prison the night before, and our crazy project seemed to make them hopeful about their freedom. They went to a store and bought the fixings for a big breakfast. We cooked and ate it as the sun came up. Everyone was in a great mood. The two ex-cons left, and we never saw them again.

Alan Myerson, the director of the celebrated comedy group, The Committee, commented that coming upon this painting was one of the most profoundly moving surprises of his life. Lawrence Halprin, the famed landscape architect, took photos which he used in his presentations on city spaces. Untold oth-

ers, to their delight and amusement, happened on this unexpected sight. Truly the Zeitgeist was present in our innocent action.

Having had such a good time with the Easter egg, we decided that on Easter, 1968 we would paint an image of the winding part of Lombard Street on the Kearny hill between Broadway and Vallejo. Several of the Easter egg veterans took part. But just as we finished our opus, a police squad car and a paddy wagon pulled up and we were all arrested and booked on malicious mischief charges. The SFPD somehow had not been informed that the mayor had requested the citizens of San



Francisco to help beautify the city. We spend seven hours in jail and later had to appear in court three times. Eventually, the charge of malicious mischief was laughed out of court, since there was obviously no malicious intent.

We later found out that the day we were arrested was the day the famous car chase in North Beach for the film Bullitt was set to take place. We figured there was more security than usual on the streets that morning because of preparation for the chase sequence, and that's why we got caught. But it was fun while it lasted. ♦

Frank and Judy Foreman resided for many years on Telegraph Hill and in North Beach. They now live and practice their art in Santa Cruz.



Vallejo near Montgomery, 1967



The Egg looking down Vallejo, 1967.



JUDY IRVING
1736 STOCKTON STREET, SUITE 2
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133
(415) 362-2420
FAX (415) 362-2421
FILMS@PELICANMEDIA.ORG
WWW.PELICANMEDIA.ORG



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By Kathy Dooley

Welcome to the first installment of a column presented by the North Beach Merchants Association/North Beach Chamber.

Our first big news item is the announcement of the pending consolidation of our two merchant organizations into a new comprehensive group, which will better serve the needs of our merchant corridor. Stay tuned for news here as the merger takes place in the next few months.

Out of the Square and Back into the Hearts of North Beach

This year's North Beach Festival marked the first time in many years that the festival was removed from Washington Square and completely onto the streets of North Beach. Long desired by many residents, along with THD, Friends of Washington Square and the North Beach Merchants Association, this was a way to allow neighbors and visitors a green oasis to relax

in during the festival's hubbub. The North Beach Chamber, sponsor of the festival, agreed to this big change to the festival setup. The general observation was that the change made for a more low key and relaxed event. Merchant Dan Macchiarini set up a photo display depicting the origins of the North Beach Festival. We look forward to working together to make sure next year's festival continues to evolve into an event that represents all that North Beach has to offer.

A North Beach-Chinatown Connection

The NBMA also sponsored the second annual Noodlefest in May, which featured the tasty wares of restaurants from North Beach and Chinatown. A small afternoon event, it highlighted the best that our two neighborhoods offer in the noodle/pasta department. Diners enjoyed everything from classic Chinese potstickers to ravioli as they strolled two blocks of Grant Avenue and enjoyed terrific entertainment on both sides of Broadway. On the North Beach side, E

Tutto Qua and Sotto Mare won the best pasta dishes. New Sun Hong Kong and Y & K restaurants were the winners in Chinatown. Supervisor David Chiu and Mayor Ed Lee were seen sampling the wares of the restaurateurs.

A Day Without Cars

Coming on Sunday, Sept. 18, North Beach will be host to its first "Sunday Streets" event. Similar to Sunday Streets at other locations and sponsored by North Beach/Chinatown merchants, Grant Avenue will be closed to vehicle traffic from the Chinatown Gate to Coit Tower for four hours, allowing folks to partake in a number of outdoor activities from yoga in the street to seminars on bike repairs.

You may have noticed that many of our empty storefronts are being filled by a variety of restaurants and art galleries. Check out Focus Gallery and Arata Gallery, to name just a couple. ♦



NORTH BEACH MERCHANTS REPORT

HOUSE HUNTING ON THE HILL, 1940

(Excerpted from “Laughter on the Hill — A San Francisco Interlude,” by Margaret Parton, edited by William Pates.)

Margaret Parton arrived in San Francisco by freighter in the winter of 1940 from New York City “and firmly expected to put down roots, find a way of life, friends and a job.” While house hunting, she found a flimsy shack on Telegraph Hill for \$25 a month. “I’ll take it forever,” she told the landlady. This is one of her stories.

It was probably a time for introspection, but I was in no mood for soul searching. Deciding to forgo my excursions into the realm of possible friends of the moment, I set out to explore Telegraph Hill, to which I already had an allegiance almost approaching patriotism.

One of the pleasant things about San Francisco is that within five minutes of the Financial District, you can find little open fields with California poppies and lupin sprinkled about, or a grove of eucalyptus trees, half an acre of wild red geraniums, or a green lawn.

On Telegraph Hill, these country notes are surrounded by a conglomeration of old-style Italian apartment houses, which march up the hill in flat-roofed terraces, by shacks like mine, clustering near the top of the hill, and by snooty apartment houses, some of them embellished with surrealistic bas-reliefs. Crowning the top of the Hill is Coit Tower, a massive fluted column, built with funds left by the late Lillie Hitchcock Coit, a San Francisco lady, who was known as “a friend of firefighters.”

When the tower went up in the early 1930s, there was tremendous opposition from all of San Francisco’s artists, who complained that the tower, some 230 feet high, was completely out of balance with the shape and height of the Hill, which, of course, it is. But the money was there, the city fathers were adamant and the monstrosity went up. Now the artists ignore the whole thing as much as they can, and talk wistfully of the days when there was just a wild meadow at the top of the Hill and a ring of eucalyptus trees.

I used to climb the Filbert Street Steps toward the tower, meander up the loping path bordered with yellow broom, wander along the battlements at the foot of

the tower and among the eucalyptus trees, which, because of someone’s oversight, no doubt, have not been cut down. At night, the place was black and windy, deserted, the city a rosy glow in the evening fog. I felt like “Hamlet” and loved it.

Hal, my actor friend, came back to town and decided that he too wanted to live on the Hill. I was eager to help him look, for although I had been there two months, I had not yet been inside any other Hill homes.

We started out one morning down a long flight of rickety wooden steps, flower gardens and lawns in ascending terraces on either side. At the end, just before the stairs plunged grimly down to Sansome and the ice plant and warehouses which surrounded the base of the eastern side of the Hill, we turned to the left along a geranium-bordered brick alleyway. At the end was an old wooden house positively clinging by its fingernails to the side of the hill.

It was really very charming until something not so charming hit my nostrils.

“What in God’s name is that?” I asked, recoiling.

Just then the faded blue front door opened and a woman in a batik smock with a red scarf tied over the wispy ends of her hair came out of the house. Under one arm she carried a copy of “The Golden Bough,” in the other a large Persian cat. Seven other cats trailed at her sandaled heels and nestled against her legs, which wore bright green stockings.

“Shhhh,” said Hal. “She likes cats.”

Evidently. I would have known that without seeing them. Yes, the lady said, she had a nice room for a gentleman. Just the place. The only thing she must ask was that he didn’t throw matches out the window. Of course, it was a 50-foot drop to the street below, but still it was a messy habit.



She took us around to the side of the house, and there was a little room tacked on to the house, propped up against the hill by several large rocks. We looked at them dubiously before stepping inside.

“Oh, it’s quite all right,” she said, “I come around quite often and put rocks under. Keeps the house in place.”

The room she showed us was about 10-by-12 feet, its splintery wooden floor covered by shreds of grass mats. The furniture was of the wood-and-canvas outdoor variety and looked as if the landlady had fished it out of the bay. An open shower over a wooden tub took up one corner of the room and there was a toilet of sorts out on the flimsy balcony. The view of the bay was, as usual,

perfectly wonderful. All for \$16 a month.

“Thank you very much,” said Hal, “but I’m not sure it’s quite what I wanted.”

Nothing else we looked at that day touched the house of the cat eccentric. We wound our way through little back gardens, around hidden fountains, up and down flights of stairs, across nasturtium beds and corner lots strewn with beer cans . . . it was a very comprehensive view of the Hill.

We looked at Italian flats, on Montgomery and Union streets, with their golden oak and immense laundry tubs. Hal wanted a fireplace and Italian flats don’t have fireplaces. We passed up a tall gray building with ironwork balconies although there was a “For Rent” sign outside.

“That’s a pansy place,” Hal said. “The guy rents it extra cheap, if you’re one of the boys. But you have to fix it up fancy. They say his own apartment is a foot deep in sand and has real palm trees growing in it.”

“You mean everybody knows about his sex life?” I asked. “Certainly,” Hal said. “Haven’t you heard about San Francisco?”



JACK MICHELINE PLACE/ PARDEE

In the mid-block of Grant Street between Greenwich and Filbert you’ll find a set of steps leading to a short stretch of alleyway between two residential buildings. This is a back alley, if there ever was one, and may not look like much, but it has the distinction of having two impressive names. The street signs proclaim that it is both the triple zero block of Pardee Alley and Jack Micheline Place. While the gentlemen share a little piece of immortality in this corner of the city, in life they could not have been more different.

George Pardee was born in 1857 and attended the University of California, Berkeley, and then studied medicine at the Cooper Medical College in San Francisco. The Pardee family was well-known in the San Francisco Bay Area and George was elected to the California State Assembly in the early 1870s. He later became the Mayor of Oakland for a single term from 1876 to 1878. Although a progressive, in

1902 he was nominated as the Republican’s compromise candidate for governor. As California’s 21st governor, he worked to eradicate San Francisco’s bubonic plague outbreak and served through the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Jack Micheline was born Harold Martin Silver in 1929 of Russian-Romanian ancestry. He spent his childhood in The Bronx, New York. Micheline was a painter and poet and his name is synonymous with street artists, underground writers, and the “outlaw” poets. In choosing a pen name he looked to the writer Jack London and took “Jack” for his first name and London’s mother’s maiden name “Micheline” for his surname. As one of San Francisco’s original beat poets, he was an innovative artist who was active in the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance of the 1950s and 1960s. Though considered a poet of the beat generation, Micheline thought of the beat movement as more a product of media hustle than anything else. He lived on the fringe of poverty, writing about hookers, drug addicts, blue collar workers and the dispossessed. Here is a short excerpt from one of his works:

Poem To The Freaks

“To live as I have done is surely absurd
In cheap hotels and furnished rooms
To walk up side streets and down back alleys
Talking to oneself
And screaming to the sky obscenities
That the arts is a rotten business indeed
That mediocrity and the rage of fashion rules
My poems and paintings piled on the floor
To be one with himself...”

Jack Micheline

From: SIXTY-SEVEN POEMS FOR DOWNTRODDEN SAINTS
Copyright© 1999 by Vincent Silvare

Excerpted from “Rough Edges, The Back Alleyways of San Francisco’s North Beach” (2011) by Dade Tisone and Harvey Hunt. Available at City Lights, Arata Gallery and Modern Eden Gallery.



JACK MICHELINE PLACE/PARDEE

Francisco Examiner. His primary task was the creation of fanciful drawings of California living that were used to advertise the state on the East Coast.

When Desmond and Valetta arrived in San Francisco, they found a place in the Marina district, at the shore of San Francisco Bay. Valetta hated the constant ocean winds, so in 1932 or '33 the Heslets moved to an apartment on Montgomery Street on Telegraph Hill's protected east side. Shortly after moving in, Valetta went out to explore her new neighborhood. Just down the block she discovered a long staircase, Greenwich, and decided to see where it led. One-hundred steps down, the concrete ended and Greenwich became a dirt path. She turned a corner and found herself within a remnant of the old working-class slum that had once covered the hillside. On the north side of Greenwich was the lip of an old quarry, on the south side, a line of old shacks. The land was mostly sand and rock. Other than a few trees, the only things growing were grasses

and weeds. Goat trails ran off in every direction and the ground was littered with bits of trash. The neighborhood did have one redeeming quality: a spectacular view of the bay. Valetta was fascinated by the neighborhood and continued to explore. One of the old cottages caught her fancy, and when she learned that it was for sale, she went home and begged Desmond to buy it for her. He agreed to.

There is a wonderful photograph of Desmond and Valetta that was taken



Photos of the Greenwich Steps, lovingly tended for years by Valetta Heslet.
PHOTOS BY JULIE JAYCOX



on the Greenwich Steps at around the time they moved in to their new home. Desmond was in his early 30s and Valetta was in her mid-20s. Desmond evokes Jack London or a young Ernest Hemingway. Dressed somewhat shabbily in a dark sweater, a large-collared shirt and dark pants, he's burly, strong and unkempt. His hair is thick and shaggy, and a cigarette hangs from his lips. He has a round face, he's smiling, but the look in his eye is slightly caustic. His left arm is draped around Valetta, who, lithe and small, leans against him, her back against his ribs. Her head is turned to one side, and she's

looking up at Desmond with an open-mouthed, admiring smile. She has a dramatic beauty — high cheekbones, dark and arched eye brows, dark lips. Her left hand is placed jauntily on her hip and holds a cigarette that looks handmade. She's wearing a suede jacket and a shirt with dark and light horizontal stripes. It's a type of shirt — like a French sailor shirt — that I associate with a certain strain of Bohemian. In fact, they both look like the prototypical Bohemians.

When Desmond rescued Valetta from Grace, he didn't know that although the two women fought constantly, they'd been a team since leaving South Dakota, and they were inseparable. Grace followed Valetta to San Francisco and moved in with her daughter and son-in-law. Desmond often spoke as if he detested Grace. He had a running joke that the title of his autobiography would be "Me, My Wife and My Goddamn Mother-in-Law." In the beginning, he probably did dislike her, but later his dislike seemed more an act than real. Desmond adored Valetta, but he couldn't have her without Grace. He obviously accepted the situation, because for the rest of her long life, Grace never really left.

✦
(to be continued)

LIBRARY/PARK PROJECT LURCHES FORWARD

By Julie Christensen

A half-dozen of the kids whose parents started the park library renovation project in 1999 graduated from high school this May. But, after a slow, two-year build-up of studies, hearings, reports, rulings and appeals, the final city votes on the North Beach Library and Joe DiMaggio Playground project came with the rapid cadence of a Fourth of July fireworks finale. Two critical votes occurred in late 2010: The 10-to-1 vote by the Board of Supervisors not to give landmark status to the existing library and the unanimous endorsement by the Civic Design Review Committee of the design for the proposed new library building.

March of this year saw the release of the project's 360-page Environmental Impact Report, an inch-thick document two years in the making. The EIR, which analyzes impacts of the combined park and library project on traffic, sunlight, views, the quality of city services in the neighborhood and so on, concluded that the proposed project has the most benefits and least negative impacts of various alternatives. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the findings of the EIR in April, including approval of demolition of the library and the closure of Mason Street adjacent to

the playground. A few days later, a joint session of the Library and Rec/Park commissions also approved the proposed project without a dissenting vote. In June, all 11 members of the Board of Supervisors concurred, approving the closure of Mason (a "vacation" of the street, as utilities will remain below ground) and the use of the triangle lot at Columbus Avenue, Lombard and Mason streets for a new library building.

The library project, which had to suspend work for more than a year, is back in full swing, with plans to complete construction documents for the new library this fall and project bidding to follow. Current schedules call for construction to begin mid-2012, with completion in late 2013 or early 2014. Mason will be closed at the start of construction to provide a staging area. As soon as the new library is completed and in service, the existing library will be removed and the land returned to recreation use.

The Recreation & Parks Department and the Friends of Joe DiMaggio Playground co-authored an application for a state grant that could provide almost \$5 million for renovation of the playground, including 30 new trees and 13,000 square-feet of new planted areas, pergolas, patios, a deck and several seating areas. Word on the lucky grant

awardees will come out next spring. Both entities are also on the lookout for other potential sources of funds. But the warring does continue.

A small group of project opponents continues to fight on. At the end of July, Howard Wong announced the filing of a lawsuit in Superior Court against the adoption of the EIR*. There have also been attempts by opponents to discourage the state from awarding funds for the playground. Project supporters, however, believe the numerous — and unusual — unanimous commission and board votes are not a fluke of artful lobbying, but rather validation that the project has clear and overwhelming benefits for the North Beach, Chinatown, Telegraph Hill and Russian Hill communities. City staff believe the EIR is thorough, fair and complete and that it is unlikely to be refuted in court, if the case makes it that far. Project volunteers are hoping that this year's first-graders won't get farther than third- or fourth-grade before North Beach can offer them the city services they deserve.

* Howard Wong declined to answer *The Semaphore's* questions about his suit, stating, "Too many things are still in development, and I shouldn't risk writing anything inaccurate — while the legal brief is still in progress."

NO END IN SIGHT: BEACH BLANKET BABYLON – A NORTH BEACH FIXTURE FOR 37 YEARS

By Art and Carol Peterson

In 1983, when San Francisco Chief of Protocol Cyril Magnin took talent agent Jo Schuman — later Jo Schuman Silver — to a performance of Beach Blanket Babylon at the Fugazi Hall, 678 Green Street, she was in for a big surprise. “I’m from New York and I thought I’d seen it all as far as theater is concerned, but I had never seen anything like this,” said Schuman Silver. Its creator, Steve Silver, she said, exhumed a magnetic creative energy that filled every moment of the show.

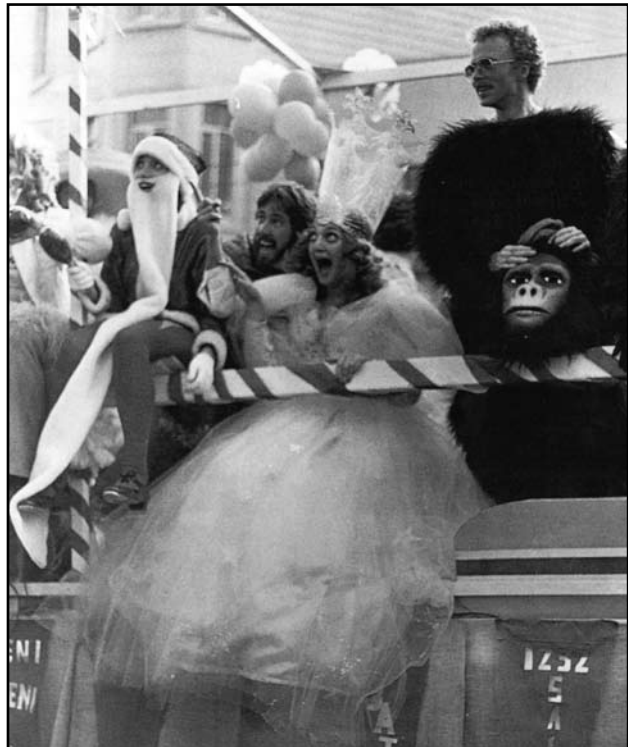
By the time Schuman Silver saw Beach Blanket it had already made its mark in San Francisco. The show had its beginnings in 1974 when Silver gathered a few of his street-performer friends and began performing in the 244-seat backroom at the Savoy Tivoli on Grant Avenue. The early production spoofed Beach Boy music and surfer movies. Large hats — though not as large as those now key to the BBB performance — were part of the act and caricatures of popular entertainers were commonplace. “I couldn’t really sing or dance, but I couldn’t afford anybody else. I produced the show with the \$800 I had in the bank,” Silver said.

He was a good friend of Charlotte Mailliard Swig (now Shultz), who shared his outrageous idea of humor and provided props to enhance the beach-like atmosphere. There was sand on the floor, waitresses in bikinis, ushers with zinc oxide on their noses. While no beach blankets are on view in the current production, the show’s name remains a reminder of its roots.

The show was an immediate success and by 1975 it had moved to the larger Fugazi Hall. When Schuman Silver saw the show and met Silver, she connected right off to his attitude and genius. “We were both drawn to pop culture,” she says. They began to work together finding ways to spoof everyone from Tina Turner to Dr. Ruth, but always with Silver’s goal in mind to “make fun with, not of” these personalities. Steve Silver married Jo Schuman five years before his death from AIDs in 1995. She was his hand-picked successor to take over the show’s production. She and everyone connected with it are dedicated to keeping alive his vision.

Kenny Mazlow, the show’s director and choreographer, who worked with Silver for seven years, understands how this vision has maintained its freshness. “In so many ways, he was ahead of his time. He thought in split seconds, which no one did then, but everyone does now. Everyone he hired had to have split-second thinking.”

It’s the ability of the crew and cast to think on their feet that has kept BBB vital. A costume can not just be made for one person, but for the understudies, too. They also need to be made with large seams for any future adjustments with cast changes. A spur of the moment addition to script means a spur of the moment addition of music. This flexibility was part of Steve Silver’s mindset. In 1982, for instance, BBB was scheduled for a White House performance. Preparations were made, including



Members of the cast, including Steve Silver and Nancy and Roberta Bleiweiss, frolic at a Columbus Day parade.



Steve Silver with some original Beach Blanket Babylon cast members.

a 50 lb. Washington hat with a brim topped with scale models of the White House, Jefferson Memorial and the Capitol dome. When Actors’ Equity complained that BBB actors were not members of its union — even though the company offered comparable salaries and benefits — the White House show was canceled. That didn’t stop Silver. To rave reviews, he offered BBB Washington Week in San Francisco.

This flexibility can also be seen as BBB offers a shifting cast of characters. In recent shows, one might be treated to succinct parodies of contemporary personalities such as Lady Gaga, Snooki, Charlie Sheen and the cast of “Glee.” Schuman Silver, however, has kept a hold on the tried-and-true Steve Silver characters, including King Louie, Carmen Miranda, Mr. Peanut and Snow White, who has remained a particular favorite.

“There is something about the naivety of Snow White as a young woman seeking love that really works with the story and every character we bring in,” said Mazlow. “At our family show on Sunday, the kids are always waiting outside to meet Snow White. Now, the old ladies are another thing; they want to meet King Louie.”

If the show has changed in any major way, it’s with the topicality that Schuman Silver brings to the production. She is a self-professed news junkie. “I am up at 4 a.m., scanning current events to see if there is something we can use in the show. If there is, it will be in there that night.”

Costume shop manager Jayne Serba provides a recent example of this process. “Jo wanted to get the recent royal wedding into the show that same evening. Information about Kate’s gown was, of course, kept top secret, so all we had to go on was a shot of the gown taken from the TV screen. We made a replica of the gown in one day, as well as Prince William’s red jacket. The director asked me if I was going to stay and see the show, but I was too exhausted. It turned out beautiful.”

The up-to-the-minute pace affects not only what goes into the show, but what must be taken out. Musical

Director Bill Keck said, “When Amy Winehouse died, she was out that night. When Princess Diana died, the whole royal family sequence was taken out.” But “out” does not mean out forever. “We had Arnold in when he was governor, then put Jerry in when he took over. Then we had the scandal with Arnold, so we put him back in. We always try to keep things fresh,” said Mazlow.

Of course, not every subject is fit for parody. “We never went near the O.J. trial and wouldn’t touch Casey Anthony,” said Schuman Silver. Other topics also have proved dicey. “For quite a while we used a Sonny and Cher bit and then they broke up. We dropped Sonny, but we continued with Cher. Then we tried to put Sonny back in. It didn’t work.”

“We pay attention to our audience,” she says. “We tried a “Grease” routine that bombed. It was out the next night. You can’t do a parody of a parody.”

One can not give a fair assessment of Beach Blanket Babylon without calling attention to the organization’s philanthropy. Steve Silver and Jo Schuman Silver managed to parlay that initial \$800 investment into lots of money, but they have not kept it to themselves. They created the Steve Silver/Beach Blanket Babylon Gallery Terrace at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Steve Silver/Beach Blanket Babylon Music Center at the San Francisco Main Library, as well as supporting the UCSF Cancer Center, Make-A-Wish Foundation, the AIDS Emergency Fund and many others. Jo created the highly successful Steve Silver Foundation/Beach Blanket Babylon Scholarship for the Arts benefiting Bay Area high-school seniors.

In 1996, a year after Steve Silver’s death, Mayor Willie Brown and Steve’s friend Charlotte Mailliard Swig, then the city’s Director of Protocol, launched a successful campaign to rename the 600 block of Green Street in front of Fugazi Hall to Beach Blanket Babylon Blvd. As BBB approaches its 40th year, it seems more indestructible than many of the luminaries for whom our other streets are named. Who, after all, was that guy Green?





ART & CULTURE COMMITTEE



By Julie Jaycox

July's art salon, "Gertrude Stein in Fashion," was an interesting and lively way to get to know Stein and her life in pictures and words by Renate Stendhal. Her talk to a full house at Canessa Gallery was intimate and poetic, illustrated with many less well-known images of Stein and even a recording of her reading her very melodious writing. The presentation laid a base for understanding her writing and put the current museum shows into context. Freshly made quiche from Brioche Bakery and the best homemade, if faux, Alice B. Toklas brownies in town were served (Sorry if you missed it!).

This September's Fourth Annual North Beach ArtWalk, presented by THD's Art & Culture Committee, will be jam-packed with art. There'll be a group show at Live Worms where you can preview the art being presented at numerous locations throughout the neighborhood. A map will be distributed at Live Worms to direct

you to locations where you can meet artists and see more of their art. There will be a poetry festival at the Beat Museum on Broadway and live music in Jack Kerouac Alley on Sunday. First Friday galleries will be on the map and joining in ArtWalk's weekend of art viewing and poetry readings.

A few highlights: Focus Gallery will present ruth weiss reading on Saturday the 24th at 4 p.m. At the Emerald Tablet check out the new space for drawing and art classes and see some art. Boom Boom Boom and Burnt drew enthusiastic crowds with their music last year and will be playing again Sunday in Jack Kerouac Alley. Check out the Poetry Machine in Live Worms on Saturday, along with the Poetry Store Poet, who will write you custom poems on the spot on Sunday. Touching the art is encouraged at Make Hang Gallery. Numerous locations are offering weekend specials; check the map for more details.

There are always surprises when artists are involved, so come out and see what transpires the third weekend in September here in your neighborhood.

Support your local artists!

Sat. & Sun. Sept. 24 & 25

Live Worms Gallery will be open 10 a.m.-6 p.m., both days.

Parking validation for the Golden Gateway Garage is courtesy of Chinatown Community Development Center and available at Live Worms throughout the event, with a free shuttle to Broadway and Grant.

The ArtWalk map will be available in late August at select locations.



NEIGHBORHOOD ART LISTINGS

Information about the Fourth Annual North Beach ArtWalk can be found on the Art & Culture page of our newly designed THD website: thd.org/art-and-culture/ along with details about First Friday gallery receptions every month (scroll to the bottom).

EXHIBITS

Modern Eden Gallery, 403 Francisco St. near Powell, Gallery Hours: Wed-Sun 11am-7pm moderneden.com

"Prey" New paintings by Leilani Bustamante and Memento Mori Group, Exhibition Runs Aug 20-Sept 21, Opening Reception Sat. Aug 21st, 7p.m.. Free and open to the public.

In conjunction with North Beach ArtWalk, Modern Eden Trunk Show and Artists' Open Studios featuring Bradley Platz, Kim Larson, James Marc, Benjamin J. Larson, Marya Zoya, and Chantal deFelice, Sept. 24 & 25, 12p.m.-5p.m. Free and open to the public.

New Fang Cakes by Scott Hove and a Group Exhibition, runs Oct. 8-Nov. 5, Opening Reception Sat Oct. 8, 7p.m. Free and open to the public.

Orangeland, 1250 Mason St. near Jackson, neworangeland.com

Eye on Chinatown: celebrating the unique character that is San Francisco's Chinatown in photographs and paintings, Runs Aug. 26-Sept. 25, Opening reception Fri. Aug. 26, 5-8p.m.

Cykel, 548 Union St. at Jasper

Chris Spurrell — Color photos, Exhibiting Aug 1st thru Sep 30th. Opening Reception Fri. Aug. 5th. Artist present for North Beach ArtWalk, Sat. Sept. 24th & Sun. 25th.

Steve Javiel — Exhibiting Oct. 1st through Nov. 30th, Opening Reception Fri Oct. 7th.

Focus Gallery, 1534 Grant Ave. btwn Filbert & Union

Abstract portraits by Liv Zutphen, Sept. 22nd through October. Opening reception Thur. Sept. 22nd 7-9pm.

First Friday

Fri Sept. 2nd and Fri. Oct 7th, the following locations will have late hours:

Arata Fine Art Gallery — 450 Columbus Ave., Canessa Gallery — 708 Montgomery St., Focus Gallery

— 1534 Grant Ave., Craig Fonarow Photography — 527 Columbus Ave., Gallery 28 — 1228 Grant Ave., Renegade Gallery — 454 Columbus Ave., Gallery 850 Greenwich — 850 Greenwich St., Live Worms — 1345 Grant Ave., Macchiarini Creative Design — 1544 Grant Ave., Make Hang Gallery — 450 Green St., Modern Eden — 403 Francisco St., Stella's Pastries: artwork on loan from Arata Gallery next door, Sweeties — 475 Francisco St., The Beat Museum — 540 Broadway, Cykel — 548 Union St., The Emerald Tablet — 80 Fresno St., SanFranPsycho — 1314 Grant Ave.

4th Annual North Beach ArtWalk Local Artists, Local Venues

ART & MAPS AT GALLERIES, BUSINESSES, & STUDIOS THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

SEPTEMBER 2011 SAT 24TH & SUN 25TH 11AM - 5PM

Start your visit & pick up a map at Live Worms Gallery: 1345 Grant Avenue

⇒ Parking at Golden Gateway garage and free shuttle with validation from Live Worms

Presented by Telegraph Hill Dwellers Art & Culture Committee

Sponsored by Vesuvio, Canessa Gallery, Artists Resource, Focus Gallery, Little Vine, Anonymous Mama's of Washington Square, North Beach Merchants Association, North Beach Chamber of Commerce

EVENTS

The Emerald Tablet, 50 Fresno St at Grant

Alice: Down the Rwrong Wrabbit Whole — A 2-Woman Comedic Play

Fri. and Sat. evenings, Sept. 23rd to Oct. 15th, Doors: 8p.m., Show: 9p.m., \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door, Tickets: emtab.org, More info: indiegogo.com/Alice-Down-the-Rwrong-Wrabbit-Whole

Focus Gallery, 1534 Grant Ave btwn Union & Filbert

Special ArtWalk poetry reading by well-known poet ruth weiss on Sat. Sept. 24th, 4p.m. with percussionist Hal Davis, and a book signing of ruth's newest book, *can't stop the beat*. Also on Sep 24, a reading by Tony Serra, time TBA.

CLASSES & SEMINARS

The Emerald Tablet, 80 Fresno St at Grant

♦ The Secrets of Paint Making, Sat Aug. 20th, 1p.m.-4p.m \$50, emtab.org

"This in-depth introductory seminar taught by the founder of Sinopia Pigments, Alex Warren, will explore the many ways powdered pigments can be used to create your own brilliant color formulations, and will include a complete demonstration of how to make your own paints."

♦ The Secrets of Gesso Grounds, Sat. Sept. 17th, 1p.m.-4p.m. \$50

♦ The Secrets of Paint Making 2, Sat. Oct. 22nd, 1pm-4pm \$50

♦ The Secrets of Gesso Grounds 2, Sat. Nov. 12th, 1p.m.-4p.m. \$50

♦ The Secrets of Paint Making 3, Sat. Dec. 10th, 1p.m.-4p.m. \$50

♦ Figure Drawing Sessions, Wed. mornings 9:30a.m.-12:30p.m., Instruction available, 4 sessions for \$65, begins Wed. Aug. 16th — Classes require a minimum of 6 sign-ups to run.

♦ Painting Your Way, Thurs. evenings 6:30-9:30p.m., \$30 per session, begins Aug. 18th.

♦ Paint your Prayers: Intuitive Painting as Sacred Creativity, Sun. afternoons 1p.m.-5p.m, \$45 per session, begins Aug. 21st.

♦ Kids Learn to Draw!, Ages 12 and up, Sat. mornings 10:30a.m.-12 noon, 6 sessions for \$120, begins Aug. 27th.

For more information about classes offered go to emtab.org.



WHO WAS GERTRUDE STEIN?

By Miriam Owen

Who was Gertrude Stein? This summer — the summer of Stein in San Francisco — has been a comprehensive education for those of us who have heard of her, but have not known quite who she was and why she was renowned.

Two major San Francisco museums — the MOMA and the Contemporary Jewish Museum — have staged shows which help fill this void. In the spirit of the salons that she hosted at her Paris home, the Art & Culture Committee of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers enticed more than 35 potential Gertrudeophiles, to Canessa Gallery on Sunday, July 24, for a Gertrude Stein salon.

For that evening, Art and Culture Chair Julie Jaycox invited Renate Stendhal, her long-time friend and author of the book *“Gertrude Stein in Words and Pictures,”* to speak about the woman she has so thoroughly researched and admired. Stendhal’s lively interest in Stein began when she was a young woman and first came upon Stein’s most quoted line, “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” from her 1913 poem, “Sacred Emily.” When I asked Stendhal what about those words touched her, she said she really didn’t know exactly, which fits well with the mystery of the meaning of much of Stein’s writing.

In her presentation, Stendhal showed slides of Stein with friends and family, some familiar and some that are not commonly seen. Most of the less well-known photos were taken by Samuel M. Steward, who was befriended by Stein and her partner Alice B. Toklas when he visited Paris. Steward lived in the East Bay at the end of his life and donated his collection of Stein/Toklas memorabilia to the Bancroft Library, where Steindhal found out about him. Serendipitously, she found he had a Berkeley phone number and he invited her to meet with him. Steward allowed her to use many of his personal snapshots of his times with Gertrude and Alice.

Steindhal enjoyed quoting several of Stein’s most



Renate Stendhal at Canessa Gallery.

PHOTO BY JULIE JAYCOX

famous word arrangements such as “there is no there there” or “why do something if it can be done” and gave examples of Stein’s repetitive and playful use of words, finding equivalent expression in rap music. She fleshed out the larger than life personality of Stein, her robust androgyny and highlighted the fact that Gertrude and Alice B. (which stands for Babette) Toklas, were quite relaxed about their lesbian relationship in the Paris of the ‘20s, where there was no culture of homophobia.

One mystery that strikes me as almost unbelievable is that Gertrude and Alice lived undaunted in southeastern France during World War II. In Steindhal’s words:

“how two lesbian Jewish women, who collected ‘degenerate’ art, survived the war is a mystery as yet unanswered.”

One of the most intriguing facts about Gertrude and Alice is that they were both from the Bay Area. This seems appropriate. The fact that these two women forged their own identities, eschewing convention, makes them heroic precursors of the Beat era of the ‘50s and the “do your own thing” philosophy incubated in San Francisco of the ‘60s. They were the first swell in a century of dramatic and unimaginable change, not only in the arts, but also in claiming their sexual identities boldly and unapologetically. ✕



RESTAURANT REVIEW DESSERTS SHINE AT CAMPANULA

CAMPANULA Kitchen & Bar
701 Union St., San Francisco
415-829-7766

By Carol Peterson

I have always loved the adage, “Eat Dessert First.” Now we have a North Beach restaurant that makes it difficult to resist this tempting advice. Rebecca Rader, co-owner of Campanula with her husband Jon, has been whipping up her retro desserts at their Frascati restaurant on Russian Hill since 1987 and now she is sharing her concoctions with us at the couple’s new restaurant on Union Street. All of the desserts looked interesting, but it was the housemade Ice Cream Sandwiches and Brioche “French Toast” and Crème Anglaise that caught my eye. The presentation of the sandwiches was beautiful, with three petite portions spread across an elongated plate, with a chocolate drizzle on each side of the plate. One of the flavors was a delicate chocolate wafer with peanut butter/chocolate ice-cream filling. The others were equally different, but I was told the flavors change regularly with seasonal influences. The creamy French toast dish is a dessert that looks very much like its name but creamy, delectable and 10 steps above any breakfast version you have ever had. Try them both and share.

When Campanula opened we went in for a drink

and a few small plates. The restaurant has quickly become known for its cocktail menu. Think *Dark ‘n’ Stormy* or *Reviver*, to name a couple of their specialty drinks. I talked with Jon Rader and asked him about opening Campanula. “We had wanted to open a restaurant here in North Beach and this location came up. The minute I saw it, I knew it was a fit. It is small and intimate and perfect for the type of restaurant we wanted here,” he said.

Executive Chef Michael Pavlik, who has worked all over the U.S. as well as at Frascati, brings his innovative, regional, new American fare to each dish. After three visits to the restaurant, I knew what my favorite items were, although almost all of the food is spectacular. Under the “On Toast” section, the Bone Marrow comes with three big roasted bones and triangular toast points. Since my childhood, when my mother would save me a taste of the marrow, I have always loved this delicacy. We also tried the unique Veal Tartar, with a small quail egg and anchovy foam. Its texture is tender and its flavor is mild.

The Seafood Salad is new on the menu and has delicate greens with a light vinaigrette. The supple addition of sautéed baby scallops and small calamari pieces makes this salad special.

Among the “Pasta” selections, the Macaroni & Cheese, with apple wood-smoked bacon, herb bread crumbs and truffle is the ultimate “mac ‘n’ cheese,”

but the hands down best pasta is the Tagliatelle. The beef Bolognese, Castelvetro olives and manchego cheese coupled with the homemade pasta — made at Frascati — makes for an exquisite blend of flavors. The pasta is so tender, there is very little chewing. There is no question what the best dish is under “Small Plates”: Lamb Meatballs with sauce Provencal and Pecorino Romano. I tasted these three times and the consistency was always there. Three tender meatballs are smothered in a fragrant, rich tomato sauce. I am told they changed the location on the menu, but people still ferreted them out. They are not to be missed.

Of the dishes on the “Big Plates” section, the Kobe Beef Burger is one of the crowd favorites, with caramelized onions, Calabria chilies and crispy fries, but I found the Osso Bucco to be the most memorable entree. The tender, braised and roasted meat — with bone marrow — comes atop a creamy potato puree, Swiss chard, au jus and gremolata. Every ingredient complements the meat.

Going early to Campanula has its advantage. The corner table on the Powell Street side has a sweeping view of Washington Square and the neighborhood. Their daily happy hour is from 5:30 to 7 p.m. I have a feeling this intimate, great food restaurant is here to stay and will be remembered as being part of North Beach’s *Restaurant Renaissance* of 2011. ✕





PARKS, TREES & BIRDS REPORT



by Judy Irving

New Conifers in Washington Square Park

In late May five large conifers, purchased with funds bequeathed by the late Jack Early, were delivered to Washington Square Park on a flatbed truck, and three were successfully planted: two Italian stone pines along Stockton Street, and a deodar cedar near the corner of Filbert and Stockton. The other two trees were damaged when they were mistakenly lifted up by their trunks, stripping the bark off. The Canary Island pine near the restrooms was planted in spite of its injury, because the gardeners thought the tree might make it. The second deodar cedar was too severely stripped to plant. Rec/Park has promised to make good on these two trees, and hopefully by the time you read this report all five will be thriving, as Jack Early would have wanted. His motto was “Keep the Hill green!” and as soon as a design for the donor recognition plaque is approved by Rec/Park, Jack will get his due: probably a bronze plaque in the sidewalk alongside the park.

The day after the planting, May 27, we celebrated: After “stump speeches” from Jon Golinger, THD President; Ken Maley, Friends of Washington Square Park spokesperson; Marianne Bertucelli, Rec/Park; and me, we did some ceremonial shoveling of dirt with beribboned gold shovels, then trooped across the street to Café Divine. About 50 people attended the tree-planting party. Café Divine generously provided the venue, the cake cutters, and the champagne glasses (thanks to David Wright). Coit Liquor provided ten bottles of lovely Pro Secco—Italian champagne—a culturally appropriate drink for the planting of Italian stone pines (thanks to Shadi Zughayar). And Victoria Pastry, which now owns Stella Pastry, donated a large

Sacri Pantina cake (thanks to Victoria, Susan, and Dino). It was a great event!

In addition to the new trees donated by THD’s Jack Early Bequest, THD also wrote a letter of support for the Friends of Washington Square Park, who are seeking funds for additional tree pruning and irrigation.

Bird-Safe Building Standards

On July 14th the Planning Commission adopted, on a 5-1 vote, bird-safe building standards for San Francisco. Quoting from the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the key non-governmental organization involved in promulgating these standards, “Collisions with buildings, communication towers, and windows kill approximately 1 billion birds in North America each year. Migratory birds are especially threatened by collision risks. There are clear steps that we can take in designing and operating buildings in our cities to reduce these unnecessary risks to birds. The *Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings* provide information for project sponsors and their tenants to reduce potential hazards to birds, create a voluntary program to encourage more bird-safe practices, and establish requirements for buildings sited in the most hazardous areas for birds.”

San Francisco joins New York, Chicago, and Toronto in this forward-looking, “green” movement to protect our avian cohabitants (and migrants). If they haven’t already done so, please encourage the Board of Supervisors to pass this much-needed legislation. I hope it helps reduce bird deaths from our hall-of-mirror skyscrapers, which birds so often mistake for clear blue sky. For more information:

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=2506>
<http://www.birdsandbuildings.org/info.html>

Parklets and Planters

Our committee, and especially new THD board member Carlo Arreglo, looked into helping with a parklet application in front of John Perino’s Focus Gallery, but there wasn’t quite enough support or funding to pursue it during this round. Maybe next time. Meanwhile new THD member Paul Webber is preparing a proposal for hanging planters, probably starting around Washington Square Park. If you’re interested in helping beautify North Beach with lovely hanging baskets of flowers, please be in touch.

Sweetheart (April 4, 1989—July 27, 2011)

A big part of my love for birds has come from Sweetheart, a 22-year-old cockatiel, my avian companion who lived with me her entire life. She sat on my knee while I edited “The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill,” 5 other bird-filled movies about San Francisco Bay, and my current, in-progress documentary, “Pelican Dreams.” She died July 27th. I miss her very much. ✕



MICROCLIMATE 101: A TELEGRAPH HILL ROOFTOP GARDEN

By Emily Harrington and Scott Steiner, Vallejo Steps

Just more than a year ago, we had the good fortune of landing together on Telegraph Hill with a soaring roof looking out over the city. We have always talked about having a garden to grow our own food and be able to put our hands in the dirt, but did not have a backyard. Our first night in the house was spent in a tent on the roof deck where we gazed at the open space with wide eyes, dewy and innocent. Tomatoes! Cucumbers! Apples! What can’t we grow up here? The task of converting dream into reality had begun.

During a stroll one afternoon, we found a copy of “Golden Gate Gardening” by Pam Peirce at a used bookstore and quickly discovered a fantastic guide for navigating gardening in the city’s microclimate-prone neighborhoods. Complete with planting advice for vegetables A-Z and calendars indicating what to grow and when, this book was the boost in confidence we needed to break ground.

The Original Concept

Noting that many people on Telegraph Hill plant in half wine barrels, we thought this would be a good way to go. We bought some at the hardware store and screwed wheels to the bottom allowing us to move them based on sun exposure or social events. The barrels also give us soil depth of at least 20 inches, great for carrots, kale and other large root plants. We started with four barrels, filling them with composted soil and plantings late into a Saturday night. The soil and plants were purchased from Flowercraft, a gem of a gardening store near the intersection of highways 280 and 101. Our first plantings last September included bok choy, basil, an artichoke plant, green onions, lettuce, snap peas and beets.

A Defense Plan

A quick lesson learned was that just because we are more than 30 feet above ground does not mean that we are pest free. Much to our surprise, one morning we dis-

covered our bok choy nibbled nearly to the roots. Birds? Bugs? Critters? Suspecting crows, we purchased an owl with a spinning head and attached her to a railing. We also secured wire and bird netting over each planter. Later, we discovered very fat, happy green caterpillars and little moth eggs laid beneath the uneaten leaves.

Another concern has been soil quality. We have been growing vegetables for less than a year and have already noticed signs of depleted nutrients. Emily collected composted soil from Recology’s annual giveaway and we now regularly add compost and organic fertilizer to each barrel. We are also trying to rotate crops, alternating heavy feeders (lettuce, kale, leafy greens) with light feeders (onions, carrots, beets) or soil builders (peas, beans). Talking to neighbors has also been an excellent source of knowledge, as most who garden here have been at it much longer than we have.

It Just Takes Time

Ten months later, we have garlic drying in the basement, we have added three apple trees and a peach tree and we have harvested bok choy, lettuce, beets, snap peas, basil, kale, radishes, onions, dragon beans, cherry tomatoes and a cucumber. We now have 13 barrels. Not everything has been perfect; our cucumber was bitter, the onions were small, most of our carrots did not make it, the peach tree has peach leaf curl. Lots of things, however, have turned out really well; beautiful striped beets, tons of bok choy, lettuce and kale, delicious snap peas and our tomatoes look promising. We have started sprouting seeds indoors and transplanting them to barrels. Our adventure has only just begun!

Go For It

If you have interest in gardening, start small and grow from there. The most important thing is to just start. Growing in containers is realistic, even in tiny spaces. If you are interested in larger gardens there are several community farms that donate their produce and welcome volunteers (Glide, Free Farm, Alemany Farm, Hayes Valley Farm). Growing your own food is great and so is growing food for others!

Good luck with your gardening journey, we hope that it will bring you much joy and satisfaction. ✕



A LEGEND IN HER OWN TIME: ROSE PISTOLA

By June A. Osterberg

For once the cliché fits. Rose Pistola didn't do it deliberately, but she became so legendary a North Beach figure that a well-known restaurateur was inspired to name his new Columbus Avenue location Rose Pistola Restaurant. When Reed Hearon opened his new venture, Rose Pistola donned a jaunty lavender pants suit, had her hair done by Joe Jachetta, and walked around the corner to take her place in the spotlight for a long evening of well-wishing from the entire North Beach/Telegraph Hill community and other admirers.

It should be mentioned that Joe Jachetta has been "doing" Rose Pistola's hair at his landmark Parkview Salon for 48 years! They have been friends since the postwar years, when Rose and her husband had their



Hawaiian night at Fred and Rose's bar in 1961. Rose celebrates with her sister Josephine behind her.

bar on Powell Street near Union, and Joe's shop was nearby in the Palace Theatre Building. There was plenty of foot traffic between the Parkview and Rose and Fred's bar when Joe moved his shop to the corner of Powell and Union Streets.

Joe was one of Rose's escorts to the gala evening March 7. Actually, it was Rose's husband Fred who earned the name "pistola," which means "a pistol" in Italian. Their real name is Evangelisti. (This situation recalls another celebrated North Beach bar/restaurant owner, the late Joe Vanessi.

His name was Joe Zorzi, but he always was called Joe Vanessi for his terrific place on Broadway. Vanessi's is still very much alive, but gone from North Beach to the top of Nob Hill.)

Fred and Rose's place on Powell was not a typical family-style operation. It was primarily a bar, which happened to be popular with fishermen who sometimes would bring in the catch of the day, and that would be what Rose would cook that night.

There was a full kitchen, but it was not a conventional restaurant. Rose would cook for Fred and herself and then for however many others had let her know they were coming. It was all by reservation.

Rose would ask the unexpected would-be diner, "Did you phone?" and if the person said no, she would say, "Come back tomorrow night."

There was no set menu. There was one long table — besides the pool table, which got plenty of action. Eaters who had made the cut pulled up chairs to sit at this long table. There might be breaded petrale and potatoes cooked with bell peppers and a salad, and the customers ordered wine from the bar. There were crab feeds or there might be abalone if a generous fisherman brought it in. Other evenings featured baccala and ceci (dried cod and garbanzo beans) or steamed clams or some kind of baked fish, and always sourdough bread. Joe Jachetta says that the cost for such



Rose Pistola at the 1996 opening of the new Pistola's Restaurant.

PHOTOS: JUNE A. OSTERBERG



feasts was maybe \$1.50.

Women who worked during the day would come to Joe's beauty shop at night, and trays of Picons would be brought over from Rose and Fred's bar to serve to the happy patrons under the dryers.

Picon Punch was such a signature drink for this bar that many years later, Rose Pistola was selected to serve as one of the judges for the North Beach Icon Punch Contest in 1987.

Rose and Fred's place was popular in the neighborhood, but Rose liked to have "Grand Openings" now and then to spice things up even more. They might have a theme, like the Hawaiian theme seen in the picture. That's Rose in the foreground and her sister Josephine, now deceased, behind her. North Beach was a lot more fun in those years — the '50s and '60s — and Rose Pistola was a memorable part of that fun.

All this wonderful, Italian flavor jollity came to an end when Rose Pistola received an offer for her place that she couldn't refuse. Fred had died, and Rose was operating the bar with the help of family and friends, when Ed and Mary Etta Moose and Sam Dietsch blew into town from St. Louis to create what became the famous Washington Square Bar and Grill in 1973.

Following the triumphant opening of the Rose Pistola Restaurant, Rose had a spell of pneumonia and spent some time in the hospital. But she is back in North Beach, now living at the On Lok on Broadway. Saluté, Reed Hearon, for honoring Rose Pistola with your new bistro. Congratulations Rose, for being the kind of hospitable North Beach legend who deserves the honor.



Elizabeth Ashcroft
Fine Artist

250 Columbus, #202
SF, CA 94133
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415.263.8959
artbyashcroft.com
eastudio@pacbell.net



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THD COMMUNITY FORUMS CONTINUE

By Termeh Yeghiazarian

On May 24, THD held its second forum, hosted by the San Francisco Art Institute, featuring an impressive panel of guest speakers covering topics from the murals in Coit Tower to roof gardens and parklets.

The forum, titled "Art, Gardens and Parks," was an opportunity to view the idea of public spaces with a fresh eye and learn about some unique projects that address it with innovation.

We started the forum with the Coit Tower murals, presented by Volcano Press publisher Adam Gottstein, Masha Zakheim's nephew. You may know Masha Zakheim as the daughter of Bernard Zakheim, one of the mural painters, and the quintessential Coit Tower docent for many years. This entertaining presentation featured detailed images of the murals, including the one's in the stairway usually closed off for public viewing, and the historic significance and background story of the imagery. Adam's presentation was followed by Allison Cummings, a project manager at San Francisco Arts Commission, who explained some of the restoration and preservation challenges related to the murals. The Arts Commission has been involved with the Coit Tower murals from the beginning and continues to monitor its restoration needs.

The second half of the program featured three different perspectives on sustainable public spaces that aim to enrich a community in densely populated urban environments.

Lindsey Goldberg, the project director of Graze the Roof, the community garden on the roof of Glide Memorial Church in the Tenderloin, has been working at the intersection of food, farming, arts, stewardship, social justice and the healing arts. At Graze the Roof, Lindsey works to empower, inspire and connect the youth and adults in the Tenderloin through the dynamic cycle of growing food, from seed to celebration. She talked about a variety of creative and ecologically low-impact solutions that have been used in creation of the garden and the programs developed to cater to the needs of the community.

Her talk was followed by Paul Kaphart, the renowned biologist, restoration ecologist and expert designer of living architecture systems, with a jaw-dropping portfolio of local, national and international projects involving ecologically sustainable roof gardens. Among his numerous remarkable designs, is the living roof of the California Academy of Sciences. Kephart addressed the challenges and rewards of creating large-scale ecologically sustainable roof-top gardens as he took the audience through several of his projects, some private and some public, and how the community benefits from the long-term impact of these projects, environmentally, economically and socially.

The forum concluded with a presentation by Liza Pratt, a manager at San Francisco Great Streets Project, who introduced a new concept in creating public parks called parklets. These are the temporary public spaces we have seen in our neighborhood and elsewhere, occupying two- to three-parking spots, usually sponsored by a business. Pratt's presentation included a variety of creative approaches possible with the design and use of parklets and how each sponsor can participate in designing a space that is most suitable to the needs of the community. She also informed us that in a poll taken in various San Francisco neighborhoods, North Beach visitors voted highest in favor of additional public seating areas.

Each half of the forum was followed by a Q&A session, allowing the audience the opportunity to learn more about each topic and the guest presenter.

The next THD Forum at SFAI is planned for Oct. 4, 6 to 9 p.m. This forum will feature the mayoral can-



Lisa Pratt speaks of parklets.

didates and promises to be a full house. You may want to get there early.

These Forums at SFAI would not be possible without the help of THD volunteers, sponsors and your generous donations. If you are interested in volunteering or in sponsorship of THD Forums, please contact termeh.yeghiazarian@thd.org.

The Art, Gardens and Parks Forum was sponsored by Canessa Gallery. www.canessa.org



By Lynn Sanchez

We hosted our neighborhood "Summer Social Mixer" on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in July. At Amante, a relaxing venue, neighbors met our new president, Jon Golinger, as well as THD board members and officers. Attendees enjoyed a mixture of great food and conversation in addition to discussion on current events and issues in North Beach.

Many thanks to Michael D. of Amante. More than

THD SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT



60 people attended, a great mix of new faces, longtime friends and neighbors. Sarah Kliban was at the door giving out name tags and greeting all of our guests. Former board member Kathy Dooley stopped by, as did Jane Fraps from Friends of Washington Square.

Trays of hor d'oeuvres were provided by Don Pisto's Restaurant (Can't thank you enough Pete; your contribution was a yummy addition to our party).

I received great feedback from many who attended. We found that people had a renewed interest in upcoming neighborhood events. The questions and feedback among our guests were interesting and timely. We had a fantastic time and hope that even more of you will join us for our next social!

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Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Contact a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

BUDGET: Chair Tom Noyes. Contact Tom at Tom.Noyes@thd.org

MEMBERSHIP: Chair Chris Stockton. Contact Chris at Chris.Stockton@thd.org

SEMAPHORE: Editor Art Peterson. Contact Art at Art.Peterson@thd.org

PARKS, TREES & BIRDS: Chair Judy Irving. Promotes projects to support neighborhood parks, green spaces, street trees, and birds. Contact Judy at Judy.Irving@thd.org

PARKING & TRANSPORTATION: Supports efforts to ease congestion, optimize neighborhood parking, and enhance public transit.

PLANNING & ZONING: Co-Chairs Nancy Shanahan & Mary Lipian. Reviews and monitors proposed development projects for consistency with applicable laws and neighborhood character. Contact Nancy at Nancy.Shanahan@thd.org or Mary at Mary.Lipian@thd.org

SOCIAL & PROGRAM: Co-Chairs Lynn Sanchez & Merle Goldstone. Organizes neighborhood social events, group dinners, and quarterly membership meetings.

Contact Lynn at Lynn.Sanchez@thd.org or Merle at Merle.Goldstone@thd.org

WATERFRONT: Works to enhance and protect our unique and historic waterfront.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

ART & CULTURE: Chair Julie Jaycox. Organizes events and projects that celebrate the art and humanities of our neighborhood. Contact Julie at Julie.Jaycox@thd.org

COMMUNICATIONS: Chair Jon Golinger. Contact Jon at Jon.Golinger@thd.org

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: Director, Carlo Arreglo. Contact Carlo at Carlo.Arreglo@thd.org

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS: Gerry Crowley. Contact Gerry at gerrycrowley@aol.com

NORTHEAST WATERFRONT ADVISORY GROUP: Jon Golinger. Contact Jon at Jon.Golinger@thd.org

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

Visit the THD website to explore a wealth of neighborhood history and get the latest information about what's happening on the Hill.

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Schedules of Committee Meetings

PLANNING & ZONING: Last Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

Look to the THD website for information on THD events. **Log on to <http://www.thd.org>**

List of new members and former members who have rejoined since Issue 193, Winter 2011:

Elizabeth & David Ashcroft, Sheila & Murray, Baumgarten, Susan Beard, Rosemary Benda, Sandra Bishop, Kathleen Burch, Patricia & Creighton Casper, Chris Chouteau, Philippe Berthoud & Peter Drake, Dwan Logsdon & Lucie Faulknor, Homeyra Eshaghi, & Tushar Gheewala, Gareth Hornberger, Elena & John Duggan, & Trish Herman, Polly Hu, Sandy & Harvey Hunt, Barbara & Ron Kaufman, June Lave, Shirley Lee, Carrie Mallen, David Maloney, Pat Yap & George Perazzo, Michael Barron & Corey Ruda, Lynn Teifert

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

NAME: _____

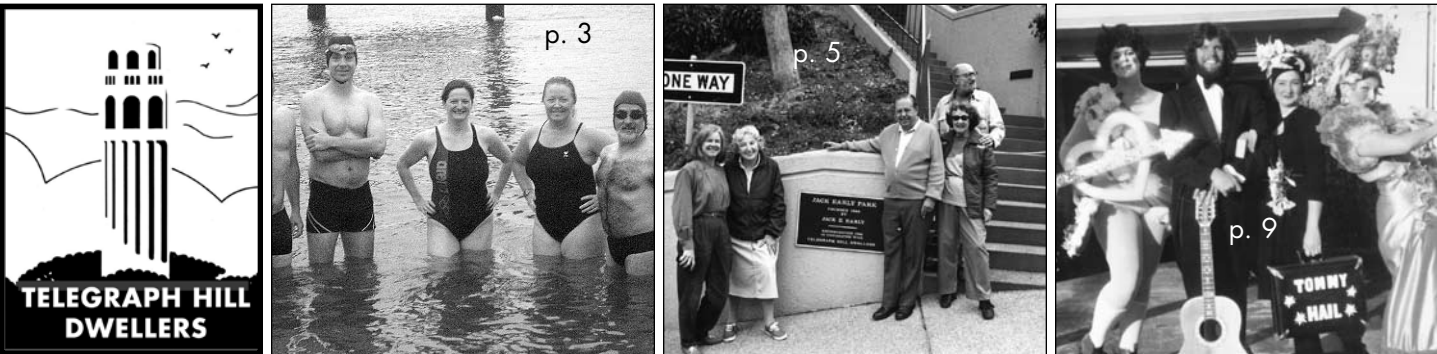
ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL: _____

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$30 Household \$45 Senior (age 65 and over) \$20 Senior Household \$35



THE SEMAPHORE

195 Summer 2011

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SEMAPHORE STAFF:

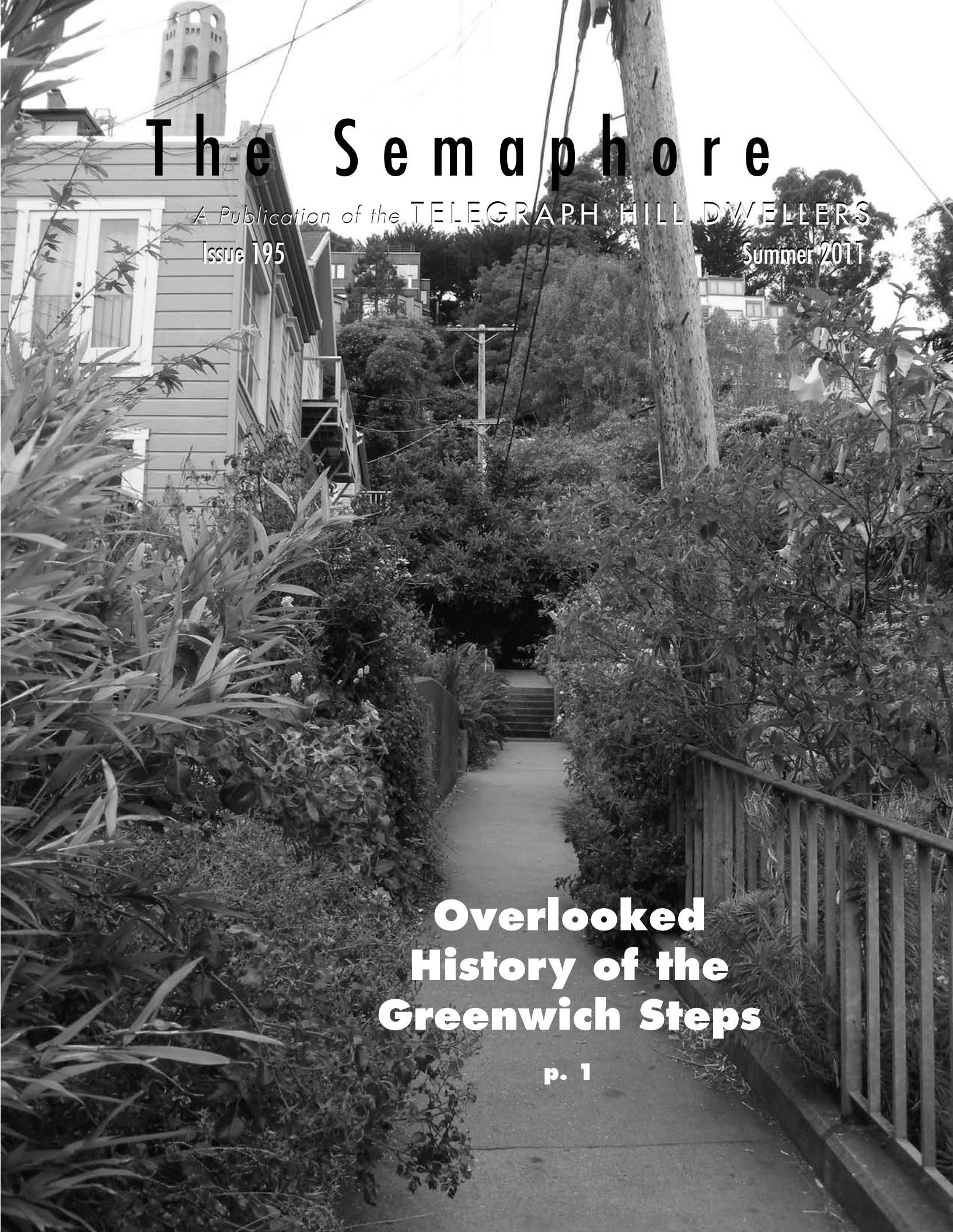
EDITOR: Art Peterson, 101A Telegraph Hill, 956-7817, art.peterson@thd.org

COPY EDITOR: William Pates, william.pates@yahoo.com

BUSINESS MANAGER: Gail Switzer, 341 Filbert, 788-8667, gail_switzer@yahoo.com

TYPESETTING/DESIGN: Chris Carlsson, Cloverleaf Productions, 608-9035 cc@chrisarlsson.com

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The Semaphore

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Issue 195 Summer 2011

Overlooked
History of the
Greenwich Steps

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